

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: COUNTRY SNAPSHOT



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
INTERNATIONAL

SENEGAL



Location: Dakar

BACKGROUND

Operating since 1975

Core services

145 children are being cared for in family-like alternative care

746 children are being supported through family strengthening services

Supporting services

1 youth care programme

1 kindergarten

1 primary school

Methodology

In October 2015, a social impact assessment was carried out at SOS Children's Village programme Dakar. It involved interviewing 69 former participants of the programme, as well as carrying out 23 focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews with programme staff, community-based organisations and local authorities. This assessment was led by an external consultant from the Nording Consulting Group A/S together with two local researchers.

The assessment aimed to determine the impact of SOS Children's Villages in Senegal, in terms of the following:

1 Individual level

Eight dimensions of personal well-being were assessed through interviews with former participants. For each dimension, former participants were given a rating, on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is the most positive.

2 Community level

Six dimensions of impact at the community level were assessed, based on desk review and the findings of semi-structured interviews with key programme staff and representatives of other relevant stakeholders. For each dimension, researchers assigned a rating, on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is the most positive.

3 Social return on investment (SROI)

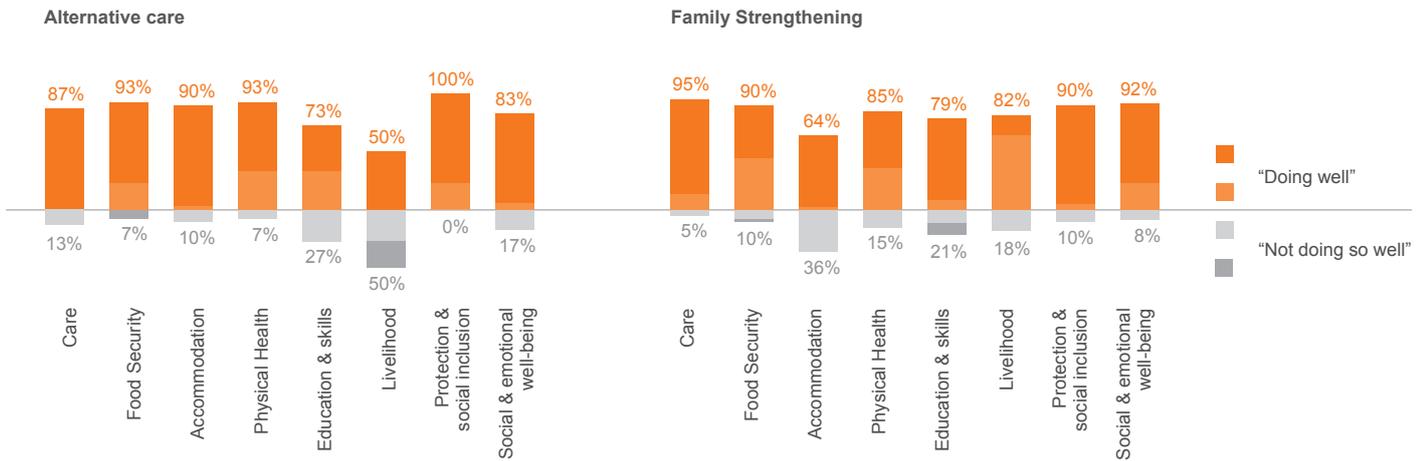
This quantified the social impact of the programme in financial terms. It was calculated by comparing the cost of inputs to the financial benefits of the programme for individuals, the community and society.¹

1. Please see SOS Children's Villages International (2017): Social Impact Assessment in SOS Children's Villages: Approach and Methodology for a more detailed description of the dimensions.

Results

Overall, the findings provide evidence that SOS Children’s Villages has had a positive impact on the lives of the children who participated in the programme.

1 Individual level

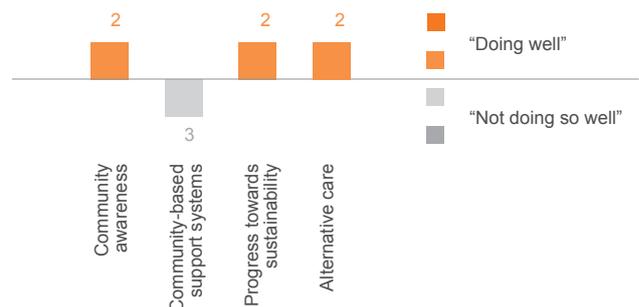


The findings show that former programme participants of family-like alternative care are generally doing well in most of the given dimensions of personal well-being. More specifically, 73% of former participants are performing well in at least 6-of-the-8 dimensions. Former participants are doing particularly ‘well’ in terms of food security, accommodation and protection and social inclusion. They are doing less well in dimensions of livelihood and education and skills. Around half of the former participants have qualifications that do not match their current jobs. In addition, some do not have enough income to cover their monthly expenses, hence the relatively low overall scores for livelihood.

In the case of family strengthening, 77% are doing well in at least 6-of-the-8 dimensions. Critically, all children are still in the care of their families, indicating that the primary goal of strengthening the family to prevent family separation has been achieved. Encouragingly, former participants are also doing ‘well’ in terms of their food security, protection and social inclusion, and social and emotional well-being. While education and skills and livelihood are also a concern for family strengthening, the dimension with the most room for improvement is accommodation. Many families live in very precarious conditions and in underprivileged neighbourhoods. Families often live in very small homes with many extended family members. The household income of many families is irregular and sometimes insufficient to cover all expenses, however, families reported that it is still higher compared to their income before joining the programme.

2 Community level

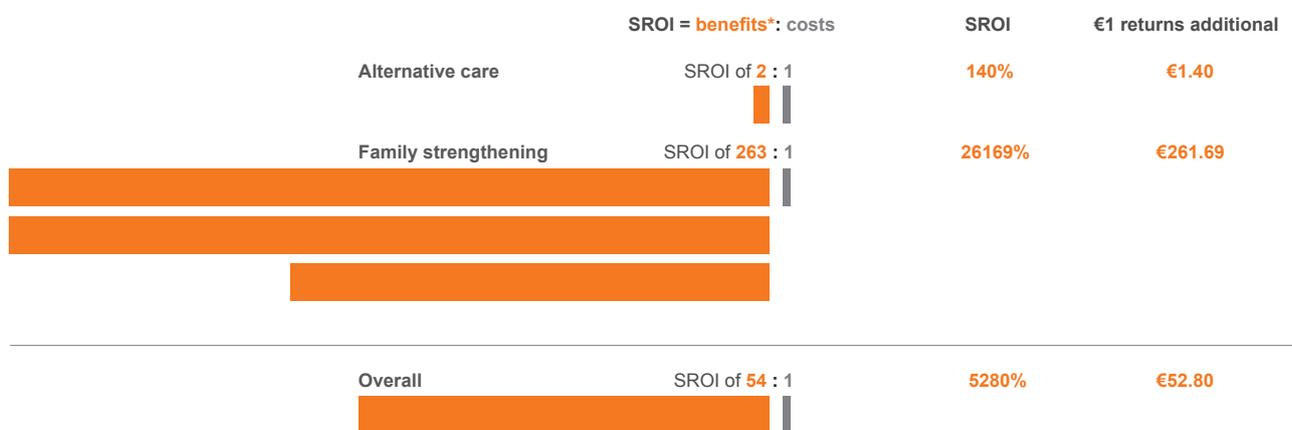
Overall, both programs were appreciated positively both by partners and former programme participants. Community awareness is seen to be strong, with the analysis suggesting that key stakeholders, partners and community-based organisations are aware and willing to improve the situation of vulnerable children and their families.



However, there is still room for improvement in terms of engagement and coordinated action of community-based support systems. Researchers note that it would be important to further formalise partnerships with stakeholders to improve coordination. In addition, collaboration with other partners is recommended.

SOS Children’s Villages is working closely with community-based organisations in the programme location, and these need to be strengthened further to increase the sustainability of programme-related activities. The number of children placed in alternative care was reported to have stabilised since SOS Children’s Villages became active in the location. The remaining two dimensions on giving and volunteering and next generation benefits were included in the SROI calculation below.

3 Social return on investment (SROI)



*The value of benefits was rounded to the closest integer.

In **alternative care**, there is a benefit-cost ratio of 2.40:1 which means that an investment of €1 yields benefits worth €2.40. The programme has an SROI of 140% which means that an investment of €1 returns an additional €1.40 on top of the initial cost. In **family strengthening**, there is a benefit-cost ratio of 262.69:1 which means that an investment of €1 yields benefits worth €262.69. The programme has an SROI of 26169% which means that an investment of €1 returns an additional €261.69 on top of the initial cost.

The **overall** benefit-cost ratio is 53.80:1, which means that an investment of €1 yields benefits to society worth €53.80. The programme has an overall SROI of 5280%, which means that an investment of €1 returns an additional €52.80 on top of the initial cost.

It should be noted that a meaningful comparison cannot be made between the SROI figures for family strengthening

and family-like alternative care. The participants in of each service have different starting points and levels of vulnerability. Children entering family-like alternative care lack appropriate care and are particularly disadvantaged. A higher investment in these children including more intense direct support services over a longer period of time is needed. The average duration of stay of former participants in the programme was 16 years, meaning that the organisation invested a larger amount of resources over more than a decade to support these children in every aspect of their development. Had these children not been supported, there would most likely be a cost to society, negatively impacting on the next generation of children and societal benefits. Thus, a higher SROI with family strengthening is to be expected. The children in family strengthening live with their families and the organisation provides supporting services for these families over a shorter period of time. On average, a family received family strengthening services for 6 and a half years.

The way forward

In general, the results for alternative care and family strengthening show that the programme is having a significant impact on children, their families and communities. However, the results also reveal some areas for improvement, that need to be addressed going forward. The main recommendations include:

- Improving the social inclusion of children in the community and support their reintegration where possible
- More effectively guide young people from their schooling to the start of their working lives and to increase their level of employability and entrepreneurial skills and thus enable a smoother transition towards independence
- Better serve the educational needs of children and strengthen their self-esteem
- Raise more awareness about the services and activities provided by the programme
- Strengthen coordinated partnerships with local actors and NGOs and empower community-based organisations
- Enable follow-up support for families through partners where possible

SOS Children's Village Dakar and SOS Children's Villages Senegal as a whole have incorporated the recommendations, learnings and areas for improvement into their planning for the future in order to improve programme quality and the impact of the programme on the lives of children, families and their communities.



Dakar,
Senegal

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